

Getting Carried Away

Babywearing and its advocates are finding a place in the mainstream.

By Bahar Takhtehchian

For centuries, mothers around the world have carried their babies in cloth slings and wraps or on their hips and backs as a means of protecting the child and keeping their hands free for work. Until the last decade, “babywearing,” the act of carrying baby close to the caretaker’s body, had been slow to gain ground in industrialized, gear-oriented countries like the United States. Now, experts believe new philosophies such as “attachment parenting”—which teaches parents to build strong bonds with their children in order to ensure emotional stability and trust—as well as an increased interest in more healthful, organic living, are causing many to embrace old-fashioned methods of child care.

Robin Stein is co-founder of the Portamee, a company that offers hip carriers that accommodate kids up to 35 pounds. Stein believes the market for baby gear is especially hot right now thanks to the success of status products such as Petunia Pickle Bottom diaper bags and Bugaboo strollers.

“I think there’s been a change in the market in the last five to seven years,” Stein said. “The baby market had been predominantly staid and tired. Now we’re in a baby and luxury market boom and that particular customer is very style-conscious and much more demanding about having functional equipment.”